

***Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
December 10-14, 2012***

'We will not be ignored,' aboriginal rights activist says

[Winnipeg Free Press](#)

December 10, 2012 11:20 AM

Alexandra Paul



JOE BRYKSA / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS *Aboriginals rally at the legislature Monday.*

Canada's aboriginal rights activists stressed peace as the watchword for Winnipeg supporters who tuned into Twitter calls and turned out for a rally at noon.

Michael Champagne, a North End community organizer, said the event Monday was the start of building an active grassroots movement from one end of the country to another.

"We are demanding to be taken seriously as one nation by the government of Canada," said Champagne, who spent the last year leading rallies at the Bell Tower on the North End's Salter Street to build up community spirit. "And we will not be ignored."

The message is stern but the methods are gentle, said the slight young man with the engaging grin.

Champagne called for a respectful relationship between Canada's federal government and the aboriginal people: "We will stand together in a peaceful revolution... This is our land and we are not going anywhere."

Under the banner, Idle No More, a grassroots movement driven by Facebook and Twitter, is staging rallies in Canadian cities from Calgary to Ottawa Monday to draw attention to aboriginal treaty and land rights.

The Winnipeg event saw about 400 supporters waving iconic flags and singing rallying songs on the steps of the legislature.

The sharp tang of sage filled the air as the crowd listened to Manitoba Grand Chief Derek Nepinak leading a drum group in a rendition of the Longest Walk, the anthem of the American Indian Movement. AIM led an armed stand-off that ended in the death of two FBI agents nearly 50 years ago in South Dakota.

One of the Idle No More organizers cautioned the crowd that the federal government may try to cast the rallies as radical.

That's wrong, said organizer Jerry Daniels. "They are trying to make us look like radicals but that's not what we stand for."

Event MC Wab Kinew urged the crowd to work at home to make a better life. "Take the energy you have here today so we truly will be idle no more."

Nearly a dozen community activists, along with First Nation chiefs and aboriginal leaders, were scheduled to lay out the details of a suite of federal bills. Chief among them is the federal omnibus budget bill that would alter land and treaty rights and environmental protection.

Calgary's aboriginal homeless numbers on the rise: New plan aims to decrease the number of aboriginal homeless by 2018

[CBC News](#)

Dec 4, 2012 5:47 PM MT

A group in Calgary says the city's 10-year plan to end homelessness isn't working for aboriginal people.

The Aboriginal Standing Committee on housing and homelessness says the problems are unique to the aboriginal community. It says issues like residential school experiences, racism, the Indian Act or being away from their home reserve have altered many aboriginal people's lives.

It's recommending a greater emphasis be put on training for agencies that work with the homeless, in order to help them better understand the needs of aboriginal people.

"I think just creating a broader awareness and looking at what success models might have worked across this country as well," said committee member Lowa Beebe.

Aboriginal people make up just 2.5 per cent of Calgary's population but 38 per cent of the city's homeless.

Jordan Hamilton with the Calgary Drop-in Centre says they support the plan and are willing to look at more training.

"10.5 per cent of services we provided in 2011 were provided to clients of aboriginal origin. We're conscious of the fact how complex homelessness is. We fully admit we have a lot to learn, we can always learn more," Hamilton said.

The new plan aims to reduce the length of the average shelter stay and the decrease the number of aboriginal homeless by 2018.

Aboriginal Canadians face racism, stereotyping in health care centres: report

[The Canadian Press](#)

December 11, 2012 6:21 AM

Diana Mehta



A new report suggests aboriginal Canadians frequently face racism and stereotyping when using health care services in urban centres, a situation which can breed a degree of mistrust deep enough for some to avoid seeking professional help when sick. Photograph by: Jeff McIntosh, The Canadian Press Files, The Canadian Press

TORONTO - A new report suggests aboriginal Canadians frequently face racism and stereotyping when using health care services in urban centres, a situation which can breed a degree of mistrust deep enough for some to avoid seeking professional help when sick.

The 74-page document, titled "Empathy, dignity, and respect: Creating cultural safety for Aboriginal people in urban health care," was released by the Health Council of Canada on Tuesday.

The independent national agency is now calling for "culturally competent" care and environments in which aboriginal patients can be treated with understanding and respect.

"When aboriginal patients present themselves — whether it's in an emergency room or in any health centre — they're not necessarily seen for who they are and consequently they're not respected, they're not engaged as fellow human beings and as a result the care they get suffers," John G. Abbott, CEO of the Health Council of Canada told The Canadian Press.

"I think this is one area which has been under reported, understated in the Canadian health care system."

According to the report, while factors like poverty and the impact of colonization are known to have an impact on aboriginal health, a "Western approach to health care" often reinforces stereotypes which alienate and intimidate some patients.

As some aboriginal patients avoid seeking care or drop out of treatment programs, the report says ailments are diagnosed later, when they are harder to treat, and the benefits of preventative care measures, like immunizations and screening tests, may be missed.

"If they're not feeling safe or respected, they're not going to communicate as effectively as they should, and they're not going to follow up on their treatment plan and they're not going to come back," said Abbott.

The report was based on meetings with health care providers across the country, many of whom were aboriginal.

In one example shared with researchers, the report said some aboriginal patients were refused painkillers even when in severe pain because of a belief they were at a higher risk of becoming addicted or were already abusing prescription drugs.

In another, the report said an aboriginal man who was beaten and bloodied was brought to an emergency room where he was not allowed to lie on a bed. When a doctor asked why, the report said a nurse explained that the man was dirty and would return to the street to engage in the same risky behaviour that had landed him in hospital. In fact, the report said, the patient was employed, owned a home, and had been attacked on his way home from work.

"Part of it is ignorance...some of it racism...part of it is just general stereotyping," said Abbott in detailing the possible reasons for the way many aboriginal patients say they are treated.

"There is inefficient attention paid to training people on the front lines in particular to really be receptive to a different culture and a different way of life, particularly when they're dealing with healthcare."

The situation is all the more concerning because aboriginal people often have poorer health and shorter life expectancies than other Canadians, he said.

The report — which points out that aboriginal patients often felt most safe when they had some sort of interaction with aboriginal staff — suggests having aboriginal patient navigators and cultural interpreters in place to support patients and healthcare providers, measures which have been a success in some Canadian facilities.

It also suggests an increased emphasis on aboriginal history and cultural sensitivity during post-secondary and on-the-job training of those in the health sector.

"This is a fairly complicated issue, but there are solutions. But they need to happen at the front line and they need to be supported continuously. It's not so much an issue of money as it is an issue of leadership," Abbott said.

"Many Canadians come up through the mainstream western European model of health care and then when an aboriginal person comes in ... they're just not exposed to their way of life, their thinking, they're approach to health care."

The report does point out that cultural competency and cultural safety are becoming a priority for many governments and health care providers, and said many people interviewed while research was being conducted expressed a sense of "hope and anticipation."

The report will be presented to health officials at provincial and federal levels, and will be shared with health-care providers as well.

"Individual initiatives are certainly good in themselves but I think each provincial government as well as the federal government...they really need to put in the policies and programs that make sure this issue is addressed," Abbott said.

"(We must) get to a zero tolerance on this particular aspect of health care."

© Copyright (c)

Students encounter difficulty with conversational Cree at First Nations University

[The Carillon \(University of Regina\)](#)

December 11, 2012 8:57 pm



Iryn Tushabe

First Nations University of Canada in Regina. (Photo courtesy of daryl_mitchell/Flickr Creative Commons)

REGINA (CUP) — Although it is the most-spoken First Nations' language in Canada, Cree is losing ground. And according to one former First Nations

University (FNUUniv) student, that university's teaching system is contributing to the problem.

Last year, Eisel Mazaard, 34, took four courses in Cree at FNUUniv in the space of 12 months and emerged not being able to speak a complete sentence in the language.

"If you had a program teaching a language and none of the students learned how to say "where's the bathroom," I would say that's a disaster," he said.

According to Mazaard, Cree courses are not designed to teach students to speak the language. Rather, they are structured so that students can pass written exams. For Mazaard, this is a problem because he, unlike most students "who took the Cree class for an easy A+," wants to speak the language fluently.

"The first surprise was that I was the only one in my class trying to learn the language. The classes are not majority Cree people. The vast majority of the students are white people who have no interest in speaking the language after the final exam."

A few weeks into his first course, Mazaard requested some speaking exercises from his professor or if the professor could read a story to the class in Cree. Neither happened.

Arok Wolvengrey, an associate professor with Algonquian Language Studies and Linguistics at FNUUniv has met with Mazaard and said that he understands his concerns. However, Wolvengrey and other professors found their hands tied by university regulations.

According to Wolvengrey, the university requires that 75 per cent of all material in language classes be recorded in such a way that they can be reassessed in exams.

"For the language classes, what do you do for that kind of requirement if ... 75 per cent of the material has to be reassessed? Well, you have writing, and so a lot of our introductory courses had, for the longest time, a large proportion geared simply toward learning the written form of the language," said Wolvengrey.

There are other classes designed for students who want to learn how to speak First Nations languages like Cree, but those classes require students to have a basic understanding of the language. For someone like Mazaard who had no foundational knowledge of Cree, it was next to impossible to learn conversational Cree at FNUUniv.

Kristy Auger is a first-year student at FNUUniv. She is learning Cree and enjoying the experience much. She is already speaking the language quite well.

Unlike Mazaard, Auger is Cree and her Cree-speaking relatives are a phone call away when she needs help. Before she left her home in Fort St. Johns, B.C. to study the language at FNUUniv, she spent a year with her eighty-two-year-old grandmother who can only communicate in Cree.

"Before I even took the class ... I would be able to say basic phrases like 'hello, how are you?' I could say that even before I started Cree 100, so in that sense, I did have an advantage," said Auger.

One of the main reasons why Auger finds herself so compelled to learn her native language is because much of her culture is so intertwined with the language.

"There are certain ceremonies that I wouldn't be able to learn if I'm not fluent in the language, because you have to be able to pray in the language. That's just the way it is, and so its essential for carrying on the culture," she explained.

Auger is concerned that if her language becomes extinct, so will her culture.

"Since I started learning about our history and the language, my life has become so much better. Growing up, I used to be ashamed to be Native, but not anymore," she said.

Mazaard's reason for learning Cree is not far different from Auger's. He planned to embark on a project documenting Cree oral history, but since he didn't learn the language, he feels bereft of the most important tool to tackle the project.

Robert Banks' one-bedroom flat is lavishly decorated with Native American artwork—sculptures and dreamcatchers that the 71-year-old Georgia native created himself. On his kitchen cupboards are hand-painted feathers with tips of burnt-orange. A grand self-portrait hangs above Banks' dark green velvet couch, where he often sifts through pictures of his past—a family he says descends from Cherokee Indians.

An Eagle Eye in Harlem: From Malcolm X Boulevard to pow-wow road trips, a black man from Georgia adopts a Cherokee persona despite questionable ties to any Native American roots

[Narratively](#)

Jenni Monet



Freeze frame from "An Eagle Eye in Harlem"

Also known as Eagle Eye, Banks has embraced a Native American "spirit" he says has lived within him ever since he was a little boy. That's when those who raised him led him to believe that unlike other black boys who grew up in the south, his forebears were never slaves. After a childhood of doubting the genealogical claims of his parents, Banks left the outskirts of Atlanta for the urban environs of Harlem. It was in the north that he says he came into contact with other "Indians of color" and began to believe and embrace all that he was told about being Native American.

B.C. Native leaders plan declaration banning pipelines, tankers and oilsands

[Vancouver Sun & Canadian Press](#)

December 12, 2012

Mike Hager (VS) & Dene Moore (CP)



Sixty per cent of 1,051 adult British Columbians reached in a random telephone survey Monday opposed the proposed Northern Gateway project — up from 52 per cent in April and 46 per cent last December, according to the Forum Research Inc. poll commissioned by the Gitga'at First Nation.

Photograph by: Jonathan Hayward, The Canadian Press, The Canadian Press

First nations leaders are expected to sign a declaration of indigenous law banning pipelines, tankers and oilsands in British Columbia at a Vancouver press conference tomorrow.

The Save the Fraser Declaration, signed by 130 first nations will be presented by National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations Shawn Atleo on behalf of the Yinka Dene Alliance, several B.C. groups who have banned the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline from their territories.

Mayor Gregor Robertson is also expected to attend and read a proclamation from the City of Vancouver.

The press conference follows a recent study from the University of B.C. Fisheries Centre suggested the financial costs of a worst-case scenario tanker spill off the north coast of the province could outweigh the economic rewards of the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline for the region.

Meanwhile, opposition to Enbridge's proposed \$5.5-billion Northern Gateway pipeline continues to grow, according to a new independent poll that also shows the company's multimillion-dollar advertising campaign may be doing the project more harm than good.

Sixty per cent of 1,051 adult British Columbians reached in a random telephone survey Monday opposed the project — up from 52 per cent in April and 46 per cent last December, according to the Forum Research Inc. poll commissioned by the Gitga'at First Nation.

Eighty-six per cent of the respondents said they had seen either positive or negative ads for the Enbridge project in the past six months.

Of those, 83 per cent said the advertising had no effect on their opinion of the pipeline (46 per cent) or worsened it (37 per cent). Fourteen per cent said it improved their view of the project.

"We did this poll because we find the Enbridge ads misleading," said Arnold Clifton, Chief Councillor of the Gitga'at First Nation, in a news release. "The proposed tanker route is in our territorial waters, so we know how treacherous they can be, and how risky this project is. We wanted to see if British Columbians felt the same way."

The Forum Research Poll was conducted by interactive voice response technology and has a margin of error of three percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

Meanwhile, in Prince Rupert, where a federal panel is conducting hearings on the project this week, Brian Falconer of the Raincoast Conservation Foundation told reporters on a tour of the tanker route that waves can swell to 26 metres high.

But the project assessment by Enbridge said waves along the tanker route reach 10.2 metres. "It doesn't match anybody's experience on the coast," said Falconer, a longtime mariner. "Their portrayal of the weather conditions, their portrayal of duration of the fog, they don't match."

The company uses variously averages, mean values and other "manipulations" of weather, storm conditions and shipping traffic to paint a more favourable picture of the oil pipeline and tanker port, he said.

"They're not lying. They've just chosen a way of expressing it that is meaningless in assessing risk," Falconer told reporters who took part in the trip organized by the World Wildlife Fund Canada to show the tanker route.

A couple of times a month during the winter, the area will see waves that pummel even huge container ships. Winds can gust on rare occasions to 70-some knots an hour and there is far more shipping traffic than presented when smaller and fishing vessels are included in the figures, he said.

"It's a manipulation of statistics ... the miracle of averaging," Falconer said.

Todd Nogier, a spokesman for Northern Gateway, said company experts will be questioned under oath about the data used in the assessment later in the hearings, and expect to fully explain their choices.

He said the statistics used by Enbridge represent the average, and not the most extreme events.

Ship pilots normally monitor closely all forecasts and weather information, and act accordingly, he said.

"They would adjust their scheduling and their route to avoid these extreme weather events," Nogier said.

The supertankers that will carry oil from the proposed port in Kitimat only need to have one major spill in 30 years in order to cause irreparable harm to the coast from Alaska to Vancouver Island, say conservation groups.

In the hearing room, a panel of company experts testified under oath for a second day about the environmental and socio-economic assessment of the marine component of the project.

Maria Morellato, a lawyer for Coastal First Nations, asked about the possible risks to local fisheries, suggesting the company is basing its assessment on incomplete information.

Jeff Green, who is responsible for the environmental assessment for the pipeline, said that in some cases traditional and cultural resource use information was not provided to the company.

"As more information comes forward from any of the coastal First Nations, that information will be welcomed and it will be used," Green said, opening the door for consultation that so far many aboriginal groups have declined.

"If you've reached a conclusion, is there any point in providing that information?" Morellato responded.

"Absolutely," Green said, adding that the end of the panel process will not be the end of the environmental assessment process for the project.

The province of British Columbia will not be questioning the current panel, but is scheduled to return to the hearings in February to question a panel on marine emergency preparedness and response.

The panel will hear testimony on the tanker port and shipping assessments of the project until Monday, and return to Prince Rupert for 10 more weeks of hearings in the new year.

Earlier, lawyers for Ecojustice, which represents a coalition of conservation groups including Raincoast, asked company experts about the risks to marine mammals, including endangered humpback and killer whales.

It's not just a major spill that poses a risk, said Darcy Dobell, vice-president of Pacific region World Wildlife Fund Canada. Tanker strikes, noise pollution and displacement from feeding grounds pose a routine risk, she said.

mhager@postmedia.com

[Northern Gateway opinion poll](#)

Convicted fraudster is behind First Nations talent search: Paul Pearson, with so-called First Nations version of Canadian Idol, ran fake trade show

[CBC News](#)

Dec 12, 2012 6:17 AM PT



Fraudster behind First Nations talent search

The man behind a talent search using the name of *Canadian Idol* and targeting aspiring pop stars in First Nations communities has previously been convicted of fraud in Alberta and is the subject of a Better Business Bureau warning, CBC News has learned.

Angela Reynolds, an aspiring singer from the Stellat'en First Nation, says she was excited when she read that auditions were being held on her tiny reserve in northern B.C. It was billed as a First Nations version of *Canadian Idol*.

“It said you could win \$50,000 and a recording contract and they said ... it was like a bus tour and they were going to be visiting reserves across Canada,” she told CBC News.

But when Reynolds inquired about the audition, the person on the other end of the phone demanded a \$150 fee up front.

“He couldn't tell me what dates, he couldn't give me an estimate of what dates,” she said.

“I was angry, I was so angry thinking ‘What can I do to stop this?’”

Scammed exhibitors

CBC News has learned Paul Pearson, the man behind the contest, doesn't own the licence or copyright to *Canadian Idol* —for which auditions are always free.

The contest's website lists Google and Best Western as sponsors, but those companies told CBC News they had never heard of the talent search. The company listed as the tour bus sponsor also told CBC News it was not involved with the contest.



These sponsors were pulled from the website after calls from CBC News. (CBC)

Pearson was convicted and fined under the Trade Practices Act in 2002 for deceiving customers of his

log home business. He declared bankruptcy three years later.

The address where aspiring singers are instructed to mail their audition fee is Pearson's home, where he just finished serving 20 months of house arrest after pleading guilty to 17 counts of fraud in Alberta. Pearson scammed dozens of exhibitors out of thousands of dollars for entry into a phony trade show.

He was arrested last year for breaching the conditions of his release, which prohibited him from accessing a computer, but the terms of his release were later changed to allow computer access.

The Better Business Bureau has issued a warning about him and his aliases.

'Buyer beware'

Juno-award winning artist Kinnie Starr, who mentors aspiring aboriginal musicians, cautions people to be wary of anything promising overnight success.

"I'm concerned about anyone getting scammed, but it's buyer beware and you need to do your research," she said.



Paul Pearson was convicted and fined under the Trade Practices Act in 2002 for deceiving customers of his log home business. (CBC)

"People are on to him [Pearson] and it's only a matter of time that people discover in full force what he is doing."

When contacted by CBC News, Pearson said he was too busy to do an interview in person.

However, he said in an email the discrepancies on his website were just mistakes, saying Google and Best Western should have been listed as "preferred companies" instead of sponsors. The contest's website has since been changed.

The tour bus sponsor was also listed in error, said Pearson, who now claims that a late-model motorhome without licence plates sitting in his backyard is the vehicle he'll use for the country-wide talent search.

Registration fees {150.00} must be received no later than 14 days after submitting the above on line audition form.
Should the audition fees not be submitted we are sorry but your name will be removed from those that wish to sing.
It is only fair to those who have submitted their fees.
GOOD LUCK- HAVE FUN- SING YOUR HEART OUT.

PLEASE MAIL YOUR REGISTRATION FEE { \$150.00 } MADE OUT TO OUR SPONSOR

The First Nations Idol website asks for an audition fee. (CBC)

Pearson said "not one penny" had been received from anyone looking to audition, adding his personal business was putting up the prize money.

Pearson says he has successfully conducted 54

trade shows across Canada and the U.S. over the past 30 years, saying the fraud charges in Alberta were the result of a difficult economy.

Pearson went on to say he expected to book auditions in 140 First Nations communities across Canada and has the support of several First Nations-owned radio stations.